

N<sup>o</sup> 15

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*The Christian's Altar of Prayer  
and Praise.*

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Set forth in THREE  
**S E R M O N S**  
P R E A C H ' D in the  
**ENGLISH CHURCH**  
A T  
**S M Y R N A,**

On *August 16th, 23d, 30th, 1724.*

U P O N T H E

Nations Assembling together again  
after their Recess occasioned by  
the P L A G U E.

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By B E R N A R D M O U L D, *M. A.*

Fellow of *Wadham* College in *Oxford*, and  
Minister to the *English* Factory in *Smyrna.*

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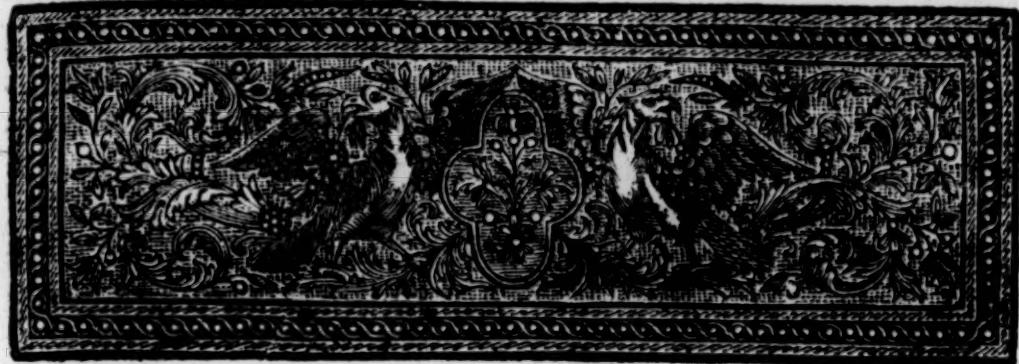
L O N D O N: *¶*

Printed for T H O M A S W A R D, in the *Inner-Temple*  
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M D C C X X V.

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## 2 S A M. XXIV. 25.

*And David built an ALTAR there unto the L O R D, and offered burnt-offerings, and peace-offerings: So the L O R D was intreated for the Land, and the Plague was stayed from Israel.*



HE History, of which these Words are the Conclusion, affords so many remarkable Observations, Political, Moral, and Religious, that I shall venture to depart a little from my ordinary Method, and take a cursory View of its several Passages, with some Reflections on the chief Incidents, as I pass along.

In the beginning of the Chapter we are told: *The Anger of the L O R D was kindled against Israel, and he moved David against them to say, Go: number Israel, and Judah.*

What was the Occasion of the Divine Wrath against *Israel* and *Judah*, we are not informed: But the Conjecture may appear with an Air of Probability, should we suppose, that it

it was their continual Proneſſ to Murmurings, Sedition and Rebellion against the best of Princes, and the best of Governments: Even the extravagant thoughtleſſ *Absolom*, without the leaſt Foundation to justify his Pretentions, wanted not a Party to appear in his Behaſt, a Party ſo formidable, as to drive his aged Prince and Father from the Royal City, to make him flee before his Son, and be in danger of loſing his Life and Crown together. No ſooner was this unnatural Rebellion crushed, but that *Sheba* found enough of those reſteſſ, uneaſy Spirits to raiſe another Insurrecſſion, happily quaſſed in its Beginning, otherwife, in the Opinion of *David* himſelf, capable of doing more Harm than that of *Absolom*. Bloodſhed, attended with every Circumſtance of perfidious baſeneſſ, lay heavy upon the Land. Murder unpuñiſhed, cry'd to Heaven for Vengeaſce, ſince the Muſtherer was thought too powerful for Human Juſtice. The treacherous Death of *Abner* and *Amasa* were ſtill unavenged, for want of Integrity and Courage to bring the falſe and bloody *Joab* to condign Punishment.

The fatal Spirit of Mutiny and Faſtion remained unſubdued, as we read in the very next Chapter, wherein we find the chief amongſt the Priests, and the firſt amongſt the Soldiers, impatiens to wait the natural End of their great and glorious King, ready to proclaim his Successor in his Life-time, even the Captain of the Hoſts, who had flain the Elder Brother with his own Hand, now made no Scruſſle of ſetting up the Younger, in Despight of the Reſoluſſions of his Aged Maſter, with no other View, we may be ſure, than that he might govern, while the other reigned.

The Character then of the *Israelites* at that Time might be, a Powerful, Warlike, and Victorious People, Rich, Luxurious, Mutinous, and Seditious, Proud of their Succeſſ in Arms Abroad, and Wealth at Home, undutiful to their King, and unthankful to their God. Reaſon ſufficient, why the Anger of the L O R D ſhould be kindled againſt them.

The History goes on, *And he moved David againſt them to ſay, Go: number Israel and Judah.* In Scripture ſtyle it is frequent to aſcribe to the immediate Will and Act of God, thoſe extraordinary Events, of which the Reaſons and Caufes

Causes lye to deep for human Penetration. The **L O R D** moved *David*; for it would be hard to assign a satisfactory Reason, why the King at that Time in Opposition to all his Counsellors, should be so immoveably fixt in that Design.

We must be very cautious, how we ascribe any evil Thoughts or Actions to the **G O D** of infinite Purity, Wifdom and Goodnes: Perfect Goodnes cannot be the Author of Evil. For when the Prophet *Amos* asketh, *Shall there be Evil in the City, and the L O R D bath not done it?* It must be understood the Evil of Punishment, Chastisement and Correction.

iii. 6.

St. *James* faith, *Let no Man say, when he is tempted, I am tempted of God, for God cannot be tempted with Evil, neither tempteth he any Man, but every Man is tempted, when he is drawn away of his own Lust.* And the Compiler of the *Chronicles* seems to have had Regard to this Truth, when he expresses himself thus, *Satan stood up against Israel, and provoked David to Number Israel.* Any Method of explaining such Passages is better, than to make **G O D** in any Manner, or in any Sense the Author of Sin.

i. 21. 1.

Wherein this Sin consisted, it is not so well agreed: But it may be well supposed to have been an arrogant, presumptuous Self-confidence, a trusting too much in the Arm of Flesh, and depending on Personal Valour, Military Discipline, Human Prudence, and Numbers of Men, without a due Subordination to Divine Providence, whence originally flow Success, Victory and Prosperity.

However, the Commands of the King unhappily prevailed against his General, and the Captains of his Host. Wherein it may be observed, that even a wise and good Prince may sometimes be used by the Almighty as an Instrument of punishing a wicked, vile, unthankfull, murmuring People.

The sad Edict took Place, and the Number was brought in, a Number so surprizing, that it seems \* incredible \*Appendix, to them that read it, 800000 Men in *Israel*, valiant <sup>N<sup>o</sup>. I.</sup> Men, that drew the Sword, and 500000 in *Judah*, one Million Three Hundred Thousand Men fit for War. But consider the Extent of Country brought into this Computation, the Populousness of those Parts in ancient Days, the man-

ner of their Education, whereby every one was trained up to War, as from his Infancy. The Prince, the Courtier, the Artisan, the Husbandman, even the Shepherd, knew the Use of some Weapon or other. The Bow, the Sword, or Sling, were familiar to them from their Childhood. They were surrounded with Enemies on every Side, exposed to continual Incursions from every Quarter: Here was no Room for Cowardise, Effeminacy, or Sloth. True Liberty, a regular Subjection to the Laws, and a full Enjoyment of Property, endeared their Possessions to them, made them worth defending at the Hazard of their Lives. While Tyranny on one Side, and Slavery on the other, render Life it self of so little Moment, so comfortless a State, that it hardly deserves a Struggle to maintain it. It is a Remark as undoubtedly true, as it is frequent, that the Populousness of any Country ever bears Proportion to the Wisdom and Goodness of a Government, and its Administration. These Reflections will make the Number return'd not so incredible, as at first Sight it may appear to them, who seem delighted to find Difficulties in the Sacred Books.

Nº. II.

*David's Heart smote him, after that he had numbered the People*; a plain Argument of Guilt, an Expression of Conviction, that he had offended either by the Pride of his own Heart, or by laying before himself or People, a violent Temptation to trust in their own Strength, or perhaps in having transgressed against the Law of God in *Deuteronomy xvii.* He had, it may be, multiply'd Horses, though not with a Design to return into *Egypt*, and on View of his war-like Forces, his Heart might have been lifted up above his Brethren.

But, whatever were the Crime, behold the Severity of the Punishment, a sad Choice indeed, Seven Years of Famine, to flee Three Months before his Enemy, in Pursuit of him, or Three Days of Pestilence.

He answers not directly, but with the lowest Resignation submits himself to the Will and Pleasure of the Almighty. *Let us fall now into the Hand of the L O R D, for his Mercies are great, and let me not fall into the Hand of Man.* You may observe a true Spirit of Piety in this tacit Choice, an humble faithfull Acknowledgement of Divine Mercy, even while under its chastizing Hand.

*So the L O R D sent a Pestilence upon Israel from the Morning even to the appointed Time, and there died of the People, from Dan even to Beersheba Seventy Thousand Men.* Calamitys, as well as Deliverances, when out of the common Course of Nature, in holy Language are generally imputed to the Lord. But here in the Case before us, the Punishment so expressly foretold, and following the Crime so immediately, points out the Author beyond Dispute.

Yet Nature with its Second Causes may be allowed its Share. Human Folly, Wickedness, and Presumption, help forward Divine Vengeance, and where a People is ripe for Destruction, Instruments, in human Appearance the most contemptible, may be made the sore Scourges of their Crimes. Froggs, Lice, Flys, Locusts, Hail, and Darkness, are sufficient in the Hands of Omnipotence, to humble the Pride of the mightyest, to make them see, and feel, and confess the Finger of God in all that they suffer. And where they fail in their Design of Correction, they are inevitable in their Destruction. These, and the like Visitations, are the real Thunderbolts of Heaven, ordained to keep the aspiring Creature in due Submission to the great Creator.

*The Lord sent a Pestilence upon Israel, from the Morning even unto the appointed Time, and there died of the People, from Dan even unto Beersheba, Seventy Thousand Men.* \* An \* N<sup>o</sup>. III. amazing Number in Three Days Space; amazing to them, who are unacquainted with the Wast and Desolation of this dreadful Calamity. But allow for the Compafs, thro' which it was to spread around its deadly Influence, and the Number will appear so far from incredible, that we our selves, who are alive unto this Day, with our Ears have heard, and with our Eyes in some Measure have seen a greater Number in Proportion daily to have been cut off, even for more than Forty Days successively.

*And when the Angel stretched out his Hand upon Jerusalem to destroy it, the L O R D repented him of the Evil, and said to the Angel, that destroyed the People, I T I S E N O U G H, stay now thine Hand. In the midst of Judgment the L O R D remembreth Mercy: He is willing to correct, and loveth not to destroy. Besides, in the *Chronicles* we are told, that When the Angel of the Lord was seen to stand between the*

*Earth and the Heaven, having a drawn Sword in his Hand stretched out over Jerusalem, then David, and the Elders of Israel, who were cloathed in Sackcloath, fell upon their Faces.*

Such Kinds of Humiliation we find frequently to have prevailed with the Allmighty, to have turned away his fierce Anger, and to have put a Period to his Wrath, which must have fallen heavy indeed, had the Angel been suffered to carry the destroying Sword into the midst of *Jerusalem*. No Pen can describe, hardly can the most tragic Imagination conceive the Waft, and Havock, and Slaughter made by this dire Calamity in a large and populous City. The Apprehension therefore of its near Approach might well move the King, and his aged Counsellors to supplicate Divine Mercy in the most Humble Manner, that penitent Devotion could suggest.

“ Those Governments then deserve no Blame, rather  
 “ ought they to receive the Thanks and Praises of their Peo-  
 “ ple, who by all convenient Precautions endeavour to  
 “ keep off this heavy Affliction from their Country, while  
 “ mature Deliberation, well-grounded Experience, found  
 “ Prudence, and impartial Equity establish, and execute  
 “ such Laws, due Regard being always had to the Ease,  
 “ the Interests, and Encouragements of a trading Peo-  
 “ ple.

*And David spake unto the Lord, when he saw the Angel, that smote the People, and said, Lo! I have sinned, and I have done wickedly; but these Sheep, what have they done? Let thine Hand, I pray thee, be against me and my Father's House.*

Remark here the paternal Affection of this good Prince towards his People. His very Soul seems wounded with the Sufferings of his Subjects for his own Misconduct: He would ransom them at the Expense of his own Life. Yea! he would contentedly make the Attonement at the Price of his whole Family: How just might have been his Claim to the most glorious of Royal Titles? Herein he exactly answers the Character of a **FATHER OF HIS COUNTRY.**

And Gad came that Day to David, and said unto him, Go up, rear an Altar unto the Lord in the threshing-floor of Araunah the Jebusite. This was according to the Law prescribed in Deuteronomy. Take heed to thy self, that thou offer not thy Burnt-offerings in every Place that thou seest, but in the Place that the Lord shall choose, &c. It was not allowed by the Law, that Altars, and Places of Religious Worship should be erected according to Mens private Fancies, as giving Occasion to many kinds of Superstition, as tending to Separations and Divisions among the People, as Derogatory from the Publick established Worship, and as ruinous of the Peace of Societys in the End. Which Observations we find sadly exemplified in the History of the Jews, even to their final Destruction. God himself therefore the Supreme Law-giver appoints by the Prophet Gad, where this Altar should be rais'd, both as a Place of Solemn Worship on that Occasion, and as a standing Monument of Divine Judgment and Mercy.

Araunah the Jebusite sees the King coming, hastens to meet him, humbles himself before him, and enquires the Occasion of his Coming; which he no sooner knows, but that with a Spirit of Generosity and Devotion together he replys. Let my Lord the King take and offer up what seemeth good unto him. Behold! here be Oxen for burnt-offerings, and \* threshing Instruments, and other Instruments of the Oxen for Wood. All these Things did Araunah, as a King, give unto the King, and said, the LORD THY GOD accept thee. Here's a double Lesson of Instruction: First we may learn hereby a true pious Greatness of Soul, which seem'd to have small Regard to the Expenses of the Gift, while the Glory of the Great God, and the Publick Safety and Welfare were interess'd therein. Secondly We may see here a lovely Image of an extensive religious Charity. This Jebusite no Israelite by Birth, it is likely, no Jew by Religion, makes no Distinction, while the Honour of the God of Heaven is promoted. Let it be in a manner different from his own Persuasion, yet will he Rejoice and Glory in the Opportunity of having any Part in carrying on so good a Work. An Example of Reproach and Shame, to much the greater Part of the Christian World, who are so full of their Curses, Execrations, and Anathemas against their Brethren for Diversi-

\* N<sup>o</sup>. IV.

sity of Opinion in Matters oftentimes of mere Speculation ; and express a willingness even to destroy the rest of Mankind, that happen to have Notions or Sentiments of Religion different from their own. So much better is the pure Light of Nature, than a debauch'd religious Zeal.

The King with Piety equal to the Justice of the Answer, replys ; *Nay ! but I will surely buy it of thee at a Price ; neither will I offer burnt-offerings unto the Lord my God of that, which costs me nothing ; so he bought the Threshing-floor and Oxen for fifty shekels of Silver.* A Resolution and Practice worthy of their Imitation, whom Providence hath bleſſ'd with Ability to raise such lasting Monuments of their Devotion and Magnificence together. We may likewise suppose this good Prince would not suffer, that there should be the least shadow of Violence or Oppression on the Subject. It might also be necessary, that the Ground should be bought, and its Propriety transferr'd, as being destin'd to be hereafter holy Ground, consecrated unto the Lord, in having an Altar erected upon it. It might have appear'd as Profaneness and Sacrilege to have been restor'd to its ordinary common use.

\* No. V.

\* The Season, wherein this Plague ceas'd, is not to be pass'd over without a small Remark. It was, it is likely, very near, if not exactly, the same Time of the Year, when the God of Mercies generally commands the destroying Angel to put up his Sword in these Countries, where we sojourn. The Corn is gather'd from the Fields, and brought to the Threshing-floor to be trod out in these Parts about the Summer Solstice ; when, in a most sensible manner the Rage of the Pestilence begins to abate, and so declines gradually till its Fury is quite spent. Of which, many are living Witnesses for a great number of Years ; to the Truth of which we our selves, some of us at least, can attest for several succeeding Visitations. How far the \* Naturalist may be able to account for this gracious, but amazing Change belongs not unto me in this Place to enquire.

\* No. VI. At this Time, and on this Occasion it may become us better to give the Praife and Glory of this mercyful and wondrous Work to God alone ; who had rather chastife, than ruin a People for their Wickedness, while there remain any

Hopes of their Amendment, any Tokens of their Repentance.

Thus gradually are we return'd to the Text, which closes this memorable passage in holy History. *And David built there an Altar unto the L ORD, and offered burnt-offerings and peace-offerings : So the L ORD was intreated for the Land, and the Plague was stayed from Israel.* To make this calamitous Story of some use to our selves, to be wise at the Expence of others Sufferings, it might be convenient to lay open to you the Reasons, why *David* built this Altar, and why he rais'd it in this particular Place.

But, alas ! I am call'd off from prosecuting these Points at present by an Affliction more nearly concerning our selves. When I first made choice of this Passage for my Text, I design'd to raise a Monument of Gratitude to Divine Mercy so signally display'd to my little-Flock ; with the Psalmist to have sung, *The L ORD has been our refuge, and our fortress ; Psal. 91. our G OD, in whom we had trusted.* He bath delivered us from the snare, and from the noisome pestilence. He bath cover'd us with his feathers ; and under his wings have we been hidden. We have not been afraid for the terror by night, nor for the arrow, that flieth by day : nor for the Pestilence, that walketh in darkness ; nor for the destruction, that wasteth at noon-day. A thousand have fallen at our side, and ten thousand at our right hand ; and yet it came not nigh us, not near enough to hurt us. Only with our eys have we beheld and seen the reward of the wicked. The L ORD was our refuge, even the most High our habitation. While no evil had befallen us ; even tho' the Plague had been within some of our dwellings : as if he had given his Angels charge over us, to keep us in all our ways. Thus did I flatter my self to have renew'd our assembling our selves together again in the House of Prayer and Praise with grateful Songs of Joy and Acclamation.

But—oh ! the ways of G OD are not as our ways ; and his thoughts are past finding out. Even when the destroying Angel had been commanded to put up his Sword ; stay now thine hand, it is enough : even in our little hiding-place, where one quarter of the Inhabitants had been cut off, when all Danger seem'd to have been past, and the bitterness of this odious Death to have been over ; in the midst of Security, as we vainly thought, have we been taught, that neither

ther Time, nor Place, nor Person, is Protection from Mortality.

Some, perhaps, amongst us had presumed too far on human prudence ; others, it may be, had thought within themselves, that the *Turk*, and *Jew*, and several heretical Sects of Christians were Sinners above themselves, and therefore had drank more deeply of the Cup of Affliction : or some might have trusted too much in their Youth, and strength of Constitution. All of us, I fear, had been too remiss and negligent in a holy, religious, faithful Dependance on the Almighty. For which of these Reasons, or on what other account soever, too deep for our Knowledge, Divine Wisdom hath thought fit to mingle Tears with our Joy, and to require our Humiliation in the midst of our Thanksgiving. For, can a \* Member be cut off, and the whole Body not suffer ? Pain and Grief are communicated throughout the whole ; and every Part sensibly shares in the Affliction.

Funeral Orations have sometimes been abused to indecent Flattery ; and, for fear of that imputation, amongst ourselves of late Years have been very much forborn. But when they are apply'd to the right use ; when there is not so much as a Temptation to Flattery ; when the whole Auditory can entirely judge of the Truth of what is said ; when a Character worthy of Imitation is set forth in sincerity ; I can't give wholly into the Opinion of laying down so ancient and excellent a Custom, in use of old amongst the worthiest of the Heathen World, in frequent practice amongst the most pious of primitive Christians. For such Discourses certainly may be of some Profit to the unconcern'd, of some Consolation to the Mourner. The Portraiture of a Friend, whom we lov'd, tho' drawn by an unskilful Hand, is valued for its resemblance ; and the Sight of it indeed may renew our grief, and yet yield some pleasure : At once it may revive, and sooth our Sorrows together.

Indulge to me a little then, my Friends and Brethren ! if I attempt something of this kind, as the last proof of my Esteeme for one, whom, I own, I loved. And, if a Tear should escape me, say with the *Jews*, on a greater Occasion indeed, *Behold ! how he loved him !*

There

There may be laid down a good Maxim of Conversation ; *Of the absent, say nothing but what is good* : and another Rule of Integrity ; *Of no one say any thing, but the truth*. And the Conclusion from these two may be the Reason, why the upright Man with so much care avoids the Employment of setting forth the Praises of the Dead. He *knows no good*, and *will say no harm* ; and therefore chuses to say nothing at all. But, blessed be God, this is not our Case : Of many Virtues in the Youth deceased, of no one Vice, have we all been witnesses : to many of his Perfections in a conspicuous degree, to Failings few, and those but slight we can't refuse our Testimony.

His whole Deportment gave proof of a virtuous, religious, modest, prudent, genteel, manly Education. By the Fruit on the Branches you may judge of the Goodness and Quality of the Root and Stock.

With what Prudence, Industry and Judgment, did he early apply himself to Business ; at an Age chiefly delighted in juvenile Diversions and Amusements ? He wanted not a just Relish of these with a constant Regard to the more important Affairs of his Calling : remarkably preferring his duty to his delight.

His Behavior towards his Superiors, either in Dignity or Years, wanted not a becoming Humility : He knew well enough to distinguish between a decent Deference, and an awkward Crutching. Mean-bred Baseness, and insolent Pride are equally strangers to a liberal Spirit.

His Conversation was easy, free, innocent and engaging : for Good-nature sweeten'd all he said. Cheerfulness and Mirth rarely betray'd him into Levity ; never, as I knew, into Indecency. When in discourse Arguments have run high, and Disputes arisen to an unfriendly warmth ; with what concern would he endeavor, with what witty turns would he try to divert the contending Parties by drawing them off insensibly to some more agreeable Subject ? Some degrees of Positiveness are almost inseparably annexed to Youth ; and if he wanted not his share of this common Failing, yet was he so much upon the guard, that it seldom prov'd offensive.

He had contracted Friendships with many, and Enmity with none. He had avoided either giving or taking any the least disgusts : his own universal Benevolence made him to be beloved by all that knew him. Even Strangers ever did, and ever will speak of him with Tenderness of Respect, and Regard.

Sobriety was a Virtue so deeply rooted in him, that it was grown habitual ; a second Nature to him : and if ever he departed but a little from its strictest Rules, he plainly shew'd it to be a Force and Violence on his Inclination.

The Instruction, which St. *Paul* gave to *Timothy* for a worthy Discharge of his Episcopal Duty, one might imagine had been laid down by himself, as an unalterable Rule of his own Conduct. *Let no man despise thy youth : but be thou an example of the believers, in Word, in Conversation, in Charity, in Spirit, in Faith, in Purity.* Nor need any of us all be ashamed to confess, that he deserv'd to be an Example to the oldest, and the best of us all.

At an Age, when multitudes of Errors and Indiscretions are overlookt, as chargeable on Youth ; even before the Age, when our Laws allow us to write our selves Men ; he wanted no such Excuse : He prevented the wisdom of the Laws, and shew'd himself a **MAN** ; and that a Man of Business, to the Advantage and Satisfaction of some of the chief Traders in our Nation ; and they (as better Judges herein than I) would, I question not, bear witness to this truth.

Some are ready to form their Judgments on Persons by their last End. A fallacious, dangerous Rule. But allow the Rule in the Case before us ; and such a Judgment would be pass'd highly in favor of the deceased. For, with sincerity I can say, in the course of sixteen Years of my Ministry, I never yet attended one on this melancholy occasion, as it is generally esteem'd, whose Comportment was more **Manly**, and more **Christian-like** together.

He wanted not the holy Prophet with a Message ; *Set thine House in order, for thou shalt dy, and not live.* While his Indisposition was so light, as none about him were apprehensive of his danger, but himself ; on his own accord, without the least hint given him by another, he settled his worldly

worldly Affairs, not without Expressions of some concern, that he had omitted that great Bufyness so long.

Then with desire, I may say, did he desire to express his Hope, and Trust, and Faith in the Savior of the World by a Participation of that commemorative Sacrifice, which the Faithfull celebrate as the distinguishing Test of their Religion. At the same time with Sorrow he lamented his Remissness in not attending on this Holy Service with such constancy, as, he owned, he ought to have done in time of Health. But for the future he was resolved, and I question not; but he would have made good his Resolution, to allow himself no Excuse, no, not that powerfull one of Example, for a longer Neglect of that solemn Duty.

Henceforward he gave himself up to Prayer, trusting in the good Providence of his Creator, either to restore him to his former Health, or to take him to himself; frequently with gratitude acknowledging the divine Mercy in preserving his Senfes, Memory, and Judgement during his whole Sicknes : and these he retain'd entire till within a very few Hours of his last.

He discover'd, it is true, even from the beginning an unaccountable Suspicion of his own Danger. But this might argue no indecent Fear: It might rather be a Proof of Constancy and Courage: Like the skillfull Commander, who foreseeing a Storm, with Care and Resolution gives all necessary Orders for the Safety of the Vessel, with readyness waits the Attack, and, still neglecting nothing, that human Prudence may direct, trusts the rest to the Guidance of Providence.

No uneasy Murmurs, no Repinings were heard to come out of his mouth. O! my Poor Father! was the chief Lamentation he utter'd. His Reverence of his Parents was founded in grateful Affection rather, than Duty. His Obedience was the Offspring of Love.

But Grief allows not Eloquence; a few Hints therefore have I only dropt, which may easily be improved by them, who know their Truth. I will only say then. Thus lived, and thus died this Prudent, Virtuous GOOD YOUNG MAN, and we, who survive, live to bewail his Loss: His Loss, did I say? I mean our own. Thus we part with our Friends returning to their native Land, and yet can we not but re-

joice to hear of their safe Arrival. True Friendship prefers the Happiness of our Friends to our own Satisfaction.

And now, since the Chastisements of our Heavenly Father are ever design'd for our Good, are intended to our Amendment, Let us make the right Use of this, which hath befallen us. Trust not therefore, my Brethren, in your Youth, or Birth, or Wealth, or Prudence, no! not in Piety and Virtue themselves; they are no Security against the Power of Death.

In this State of Uncertainty then, what have we more to do, but so to order our Conversation, as never to be found unprovided? True Courage and Prudence are incapable of a Surprize. Nothing comes sudden to them, they expect, because they know the worst that can befall them: These are that invincible Armor against Death, and all its awfull Consequences. They have, and they ought indeed to have their Terrors; but the Wife and the Good may take from them all their preternatural Ghastlynes and Horror, by a constant Watchfullness.

Honesty and Justice demand, that all our worldly Affairs should continually be found in such a Posture, that our own Death, tho' ever so sudden, should be no Damage nor Injury to others. A due Affection and regard for our Family, Relations, and Friends, require the same Conduct.

A Sense of a future State ought to be a constant Check upon all our Actions: Every Time we celebrate the Funeral of a Friend, we can't, one would think, forbear to have very serious Thoughts of our own, to remind us of making proper Provisions for that great Change.

Whatever some may say, and others write about Preparations for Death, I know no other, but a steddy Course of Piety, Faith, and Virtue: And this is truly such a Preparative, as defies the most violent sudden Shock. The Good Man is always ready with an holy Assurance to answer to the most unexpected Call, I come, O! Blessed L O R D : I am ready, O! my G o d , to perform thy Will: Receive my Soul, O! thou Holy Saviour of Mankind, and place it in those Mansions, which thou haft prepared for the Faithfull before the Foundation of the World.

Having thus paid this Debt of Friendship to the Departed, thus performed the last Act of Justice due to him, let us return to the Argument, whence we have gone aside a little, and consider the Reason for the Royal Penitents building his Altar; and examine why he chose to raise it in that Particular Place: And the Reasons on each Account might have been these.

*First*, That he might thereon make a Burnt-Offering of *Serm. II.* Attonement.

*Secondly*, That he might offer a Peace-Offering of Thanksgiving.

*Thirdly*, That he might at the same Time erect a Monument of Divine Judgment and Mercy.

He caused it to be built in that Particular Place for Three Reasons also. As,

*First*, Because it was expressly appointed there by God himself.

*Secondly*, Because he could not with Safety go to the established Place of Worship.

*Thirdly*, Because a stop was put in a remarkable Manner to this sad Visitation, just in this Place.

Each of these Reasons, on both Accounts, may afford us a Remark applicable to our selves as Christians, met in the House of God, to return him Thanks and Praise for our Safety and Deliverance from the Dangers with which we have been surrounded.

*First*, then, *David* built this Altar, that he might thereon make a Burnt-Offering for Attonement. He was now truly sensible of his own Sin as well, as of the general Wickedness of the Nation: He now felt the chastizing Hand of incensed

**Omnipotence:** For a Good Prince ever bears his Part in the Calamitys of his People, as an affectionate Parent always has his Share in the Afflictions of his Family. At this Time then, while deeply toucht with his own and the common Iniquity, directed by one of **G o d's** Prophets, he builds an Altar for a Sacrifice of Attонement.

As Sacrifices allmost from the beginning of the World were esteemed as the Means of appeasing Divine Vengeance, and reconciling the offended Deity, so the Almighty himself in great Condescension to Man's Weakness, not only allows this Method of Pacification, but prescribes it even with the minutest Circumstances of performing it appointed by himself.

Not but that the Royal Psalmist on other Occasions knew full well, and endeavour'd to teach the People as much, that these Sacrifices had no real intrinsic Worth in themselves, had no propitiatory Virtue in their own Nature, all their Prevalence, all their Efficacy depended on Divine Appointment; and they were accepted purely as Arguments of Obedience, and Tokens of Repentance.

For at another Time in his particular Case he implores **Psal. 51.** Divine Mercy and Pardon in quite another Strain: *Wash me throughly from mine Iniquity, and cleanse me from my Sin, for I acknowledge my Transgressions, and my Sin is ever before me. Thou desirest no Sacrifice, else would I give it thee. Thou delightest not in Burnt-offerings. The Sacrifices of God are a broken Spirit, a broken and a Contrite Heart, O God! thou wilt not despise.*

**Psal. 50.** In another Psalm he introduces the Almighty asking in an expostulatory Stile. *Will I eat the Flesh of Bulls, or drink the Blood of Goats? offer unto G o d Thanksgiving, and pay thy Vows unto the most High. Call upon me in the Day of Trouble, I will deliver thee, and thou shalt glorify me.*

God is Spirit, and they that Worship him, must Worship him in Spirit and in Truth. All true acceptable Service then must flow from the Heart, be the result of right Reason instructed, influenced, actuated by Divine Grace.

But yet as bearing with human Infirmitys he rejecteth not outward, carnal Ordinances, when comply'd with in Obedience to Divine, or Human Laws, when Humility Love and Faith Sanctify the Action. *Thus in the Profane Insurrection*

of Corah, Dathan, and Abiram, when the infatuated People murmured at their tremendous, but deserved End, when these their Murmuring provoked the Almighty's Wrath against them, and brought down the Plague upon them for their Punishment, Moses orders the High Priest to take Incense, and make an Atonement. And Aaron took, as Moses commanded, and ran into the midst of the Congregation, and behold the Plague was begun among the People, and he put on Incense, and made an Atonement for the People. And he stood between the Dead and the Living, and the Plague was stayed.

In like Manner David and the Elders of the People humbled themselves before the most high GOD, offered the appointed Burnt-offering for Atonement, their Sacrifice was accepted, the L O R D was entreated for the Land, and the Plague was stayed from *Israel*.

Secondly, The Second Reason of building this Altar, was for a Peace-offering of Thanksgiving. The Difference between the Burnt-offering of Atonement, and the Peace-offering of Thanksgiving may be learnt in *Leviticus*. *This vii. 11,* is the Law of the Sacrifice of Peace-offerings, which he shall *12, 13.* offer unto the Lord. If he offer it for a Thanksgiving, then he shall offer it with the Sacrifice of Thanksgiving unleavened Cakes mingled with Oyl, and unleavened Wafers anointed with Oyl, and Cakes mingled with Oyl of fine Flour, fryed. Besides the Cakes he shall offer for his Offering leavened Bread with the Sacrifice of Thanksgiving of his Peace-offering.

That the Peace-offerings in the Case before us were designed as a Sacrifice of Thanksgiving, the Collector of the *Chronicles* intimates to us very strongly in Araunah's Answer to the King. *I give thee the Oxen for Burnt-offerings, and the threshing Instruments for Wood, and the Wheat for the Meat-offerings.*

We may observe then, that the principal internal Virtues of this Public Service, were the Efficacy of Prayer and Praise, Intercession and Thanksgiving couched under the External Form of Burnt-offerings, and Peace-offerings: And during his Sacrifice of Burnt-offering he was given to know, that he and his Sacrifice were accepted,

cepted, *For the L O R D answered him from Heaven by Fire upon the Altar of Burnt-offering.* A miraculous Testimony of Divine Approbation.

*Thirdly, A Third Reason for building this Altar might be for a Monument of Divine Judgment and Mercy together.* Altars erected by way of Memorial, were frequent among the Ancients of all Nations. Nor want we some Marks of this Use in the Sacred Books. *Thus Jacob took the Stones, which he had used as a Pillow whereon to Sleep, and set them up for a Pillar, and poured Oyl upon the top of it with a Vow, that that Stone, which he had set for a Pillar, should thereafter be G o d ' s H o u s e.* *Thus when Laban and Jacob took their last Leave of one another, they raised an Heap of Stones whereon they Eat, and whereon they offered Sacrifice, saying this Heap be Witness, and this Pillar be Witness between us this Day.* When the Reubenites, whose Allotment was on t'other Side Jordan, were reproved, and threatned with War and Ruin by the other Tribes, for having built them an Altar in the Land of their Possessions, they pleaded their Innocence, and justify the Fact, by alledging what they had built, was neither for Burnt-offerings, nor for Sacrifices. God forbid, say they, that we should rebell against the L O R D, and turn this Day from following the L O R D to build an Altar for Burnt-offerings, for Meat-offerings or for Sacrifices, besides the Altar of the L O R D O U R G O D, that is before his Tabernacle; but that it might be a Witness between Us, and You, and Our Generations after us, &c.

This Altar then of David built on the Threshing-floor of Araunah did serve indeed at that Time, and on that Occasion for Burnt-offerings of Attonement, and Peace-offerings of Thanksgiving; but in After-times, when that first Occasion was removed, it might remain only as a Monument of the King's and People's Offence against the most High, of the severe Chastisement of their Transgressions, and of the Almighty's remembring Mercy in the midst of Judgment. Having thus assigned some Reasons of the Altar's being built, we will also enquire a little into the Reasons of its being built in this particular Place.

**Firſt**, The Firſt Reaſon propoſed was, because it was ex-  
preſſly appointed by God himſelf: Otherwife this great  
King, himſelf a Prophet, might not have erected an Altar  
for Sacrifice.

The Tabernacle of the **L o r d**, which *Moses* made in the  
Wildernesſ, and the Altar of the Burnt-offering were at that  
Seaon in the High-place at *Gibeon*, and thither were the  
Tribes obliged to go up to Worſhip, to pay their Vows, and  
offer their Sacrifices of Attonement and Thanksgiving, both  
to keep up a ſtrict Uniformity of Worſhip thro-out the  
Land, and to prevent all Kinds and Degrees of Idolatrous  
Innovation.

Without any Derogation then from the Regal Supremacy  
in Religious Affairs, a Power exerciſed by this King him-  
ſelf, as appears at Large in the Firſt Book of *Chronicles*,  
Chapters 16, 23, 24, 25, and 26. without any Diminution  
I ſay of the Royal Authority, a new Altar might not have  
been buiſt by the King himſelf in a Place diſſerent from the  
Naſional and eſtabliſhed One. This was reſerved by God  
as a Peculiar of Divine Prerogatiue: No! not the Prince,  
and Priests, and People together might change this Funda-  
mental Law of their Conſtitution, because appointed by an  
Authority above the Controll of Human Power.

This was a conſiderable Part in that great Sin of *Je-  
roboam*, whereby he made *Israel* to Sin, mentioned in Sacred  
Story, as an Eternal Reproach on his Name and Memory.  
He made Two Calves of Gold, and ſaid unto the People, it is 1 Kings  
too muſh for you to go up to *Jeruſalem*, behold thy Gods! O! 12.  
*Israel*! and he ſet the one in *Bethel*, and the other in *Dan*:  
And this Thing became a Sin, for the People went to Worſhip  
before the one even unto *Dan*. And he offered upon the Altar,  
which he had made in *Bethel*, the Fifteenth Day of the  
Eighth Month, even in the Month which he had deuiſed in his  
own Heart, and ordained a Feaſt unto the Children of *Israel*,  
and he offered upon the Altar, and burnt Incenſe. The Divine  
Displeaſure was immediately manifested againſt this unhal-  
lowed Altar, when in the very next Paſſage we find it rent  
in Piecēs in a miraclous Manner, and the King's Hand  
as wonderfullly withered, when he ſtretched it out to lay  
hold on the Prophet. Here was, it's true, Idolatry mix'd

with those profane Innovations: But the drawing off the People from going up to *Jerusalem* to Worship at the appointed solemn Seasons, the erecting new Altars in Opposition to the National one are no small Parts of his Crime.

*Judah* also about the same Time is reproved for the same Sin, and reproached with the like Folly: For they built them high Places, and Images, and Groves, on every High Hill, and under every Green Tree, wherein they are said to have done Evil in the Sight of the **L O R D**, and to have provoked him to Jealousy with their Sins. So soon after the building of the Temple had the whole Nation departed from the Law of the most High.

In the beginning of *Solomon's* Reign we are told that the People sacrificed in high Places, because there was no House built unto the Name of the Lord until those Days. How far the Captivity of the Ark might justify this Practice by the Argument of Necessity, until it was brought back by *David*, I shant determine. But it seems to have given Rise to these high Places, at least to have been their Excuse. However, the King himself we are told went to *Gibeon*, to Sacrifice there, for that was the great high Place. That was the great high Place, because the Tabernacle of the **L O R D** which *Moses* made in the Wilderness, and the Altar of the Burnt-offering were at that Season in the high Place at *Gibeon*, as we are informed by the Holy Chronologer in the *Cafe* before us: And there it remained until brought up by *Solomon* and the whole People, and placed in the Temple built unto the Name of the Lord. It was this Altar then, and the Ark of the Covenant, that may have been esteemed as the Consecration of the Temple it self, for while the Ark, and the Altar remained there, their Burnt-offerings and their Sacrifices of every Kind were rightly and legally performed, according to the everlasting Edict recited before.

It was therefore for the Sake, and on Account of the Ark and the Altar that *Jerusalem* it self was accounted Holy, that the Temple was Holy, and the Resting-Place of the Ark was the Holiest of Holys: And while these were preserved, hither were the Tribes obliged to come and Worship the God of *Israel*.

Nothing less therefore than an immediate Appointment from God himself, could have been a Justification for David's erecting an Altar whereon to offer Burnt-offerings, and Peace-offerings in the threshing Floor of *Aranaah*.

*Secondly, A Second Reason for building this Altar in that Place, notwithstanding the Law against it, a Law in Force till a Superior Power had dispensed with it, was, because he could not safely go to the established Place of Public Worship, which was at *Gibeon*, for there was the Tabernacle, and there was the Altar of Burnt-offering: But thither he could not go to enquire of God, for he was afraid, because of the Sword of the Angel of the Lord.* <sup>1 Chron. 22. 30.</sup>  
An Expression denoting the Pestilence to have been in that Place.

Behold here the Clemency, the Compassion, the Goodness of our Heavenly Father. He will dispense with his own Laws, he will send his Holy Prophet with the Dispensation, he will supersede, and suspend the essential Law of his everlasting Covenant, a Law to be observed by the People of *Judah* and *Israel*, as long as they should remain a People. He would himself propose the Expedient, whereby they might shew their Piety to Heaven, without any Danger or Prejudice to their Safety. To shew us, that RELIGION never was design'd to be a Vexation, a Torment, and a Snare to Mankind. The Great God, but not more Great than Good, would not oblige the Prince, and Priests, and People to carry up their Offerings of Atonement, and their Sacrifices of Thanksgiving to the high Place in *Gibeon*, to the Altar of the Tabernacle, as by his own positive Law, they ought to have done. He would rather shew Mercy than demand Sacrifice: Nor should his Worship ever ly under the Reproach of being burthensome and dangerous to Human Welfare.

Some in the Simplicity of their Zeal, and others in the Dissimulation of their Hearts might have said, *Gibeon* is the established Place of Worship, thither ought we to go up, and the Service of God is to be preferred to our Safety, or our Lives. But eternal Truth, Goodness, and Wisdome will correct the Superstition of the one, and reprove the

Hypocrisy of the others: To shew that **R E A L** and unfeigned Necessity is not so much an **Excuse**, as a **Justification** of the **Omission** of several **Points**, which in other **Cases**, and under different **Circumstances** would have been our bounden **Duty**.

Had not the Prophet appointed in this extraordinary Manner, where this Attонement should have been built, the sorrowing afflicted Prince, with the Elders of the Congregation, cloathed in Sackcloth, instead of fine Linen, and sprinkled with Ashes instead of precious Ointments, as a Manifestation of their Grief, Misery, and Woe, might have humbled themselves with Prayer and Fasting, and have made their Supplication, and Intercession in the most powerful Manner, that their Sorrow and their Penitence might have suggested; but an **Altar** they might not have raised: And they might have said, who knoweth, but the Lord may be entreated without the Solemnyty of a Burnt-offering? This they must have done rather, than with the im-

**1 Sam. 13.** patient, improvident *Saul* to have forced themselves, and **12.** have offered an unacceptable Burnt-offering in an unlawfull Manner.

Had their penitent Crys been heard and the Lord by some exaraordinary Sign had discovered, that his fierce Wrath was turn'd away, they might have offered their Sacrifices of Thanksgivings in the Joy of their Hearts, with the Praises and Acclamations of their Mouths: But even this their Pious Gratitude would not have justified them in building an unauthorised Altar for their Peace-offering: For this they must have tarryed, till they could with Safety have paid their Vows at the appointed Place. No Pretense of Religion therefore can justify Men, when it is

**1 Sam. 15.** performed in Opposition to just Authority. *To obey is better than Sacrifice, and to barken than the Fat of Rams,* is a standing Rule, and an uncontroulable Law in all Religious Affairs.

In Regard therefore to the Safety of his Worshippers, to testify his gracious Acceptance of their Humiliation, and to indemnify them in going contrary to the Laws in Force, did the Almighty direct that Altar to be built in that particular Place.

*Thirdly, The Third Reason* intimated was, because here in a particular Manner a most remarkable Stop was put to this severe Visitation. Here it was, that *David* lift up his Eyes, and saw the Angel of the Lord stand between the Earth and the Heaven, having a drawn Sword in his Hand, stretched out over *Jerusalem*. Here *David* and the Elders of *Israel* cloathed in Sackcloath, fell upon their Faces, humbled themselves, and made Intercession for the People. Here the Angel of Destruction received that mercyful Countermand, *stay now thy Hand, it is enough.* Here he was forbid to spread Ruine any farther, was denied Entrance into *Jerusalem*. A Place then it was worthy of Religious Regard, and Holy Observation. A Place to be remembered with Awe and Gratitude by the present and future Generations.

Man's Memory, alas! is very frail, and short in recording and reconciling Divine Judgements and Mercys. While they see the chastizing Hand of Heaven lifted up, and the Terrors of the Lord surrounding them, while their Fears prevail; while they feel the Weight of present Afflictions, and have Reason to apprehend more and worse to come; while Grief and Dread take Possession of their Souls, what Vows and Resolutions will they not make? How ardent are their Prayers? How strong their Crys? With how vehement a Zeal do they offer up their Supplications? What Signs of a lively Compunction, and Humiliation do they not discover in all that they say, in all that they do?

While the immediate Prospect of a Shipwreck is before the Mariner's Eyes, when human Skill has done it's utmost, Man's Strength begins to fail, then with what Fervor does he call, **L O R D** have Mercy on us! his Voice is heard: The Storm abates, a favourable Gale arises, and carryeth the Vessel safe to its wish'd for Port: But then alas! How immediately are his Vows and Danger forgotten together? Both owing to the Tempest; both of the same Duration.

When the Mercys of the most High glare directly in our Eyes with so strong a Light, that we can't forbear to behold and admire them, a Pious Gratitude may enflame our Hearts,

Hearts, and break out into Holy Acclamations of Joy and Praise. But the devout Rapture passes like a Flash of Lightning, and our Deliverance is hardly longer liv'd in our Memory. One single Day has been often known too long for this Holy Ecstasy to continue.

Josh. 4.  
5, 6, 7.

In all Ages and Nations therefore has it been thought convenient to erect lasting Monuments of signal Blessings as near, as may be to the Place where they were bestowed in some remarkable manner: and then by Tradition from Father to Son, as in the Case of the twelve Stones taken out of *Jordan*, and placed on the other side, thro' Succession of many Ages, or by Inscription by far the surer and more lasting Memorial to perpetuate the Mercy so recorded.

Thus when any should pass by and ask, What meaneth this Altar? and why was it erected here? it might be answer'd them, or they might read themselves, in such a Reign and in such a Year, on such an Occasion the **LORD** was provoked against his People; and in Testimony of his wrath he sent amongst them a Pestilence for three Days, which destroy'd 70000 Men: But here just in this Place the Prince and Elders humbled themselves in behalf of the People: their Supplication was heard; and *the LORD was entreated for the Land*: For on this very Spot, that Deluge of Destruction had Bounds set to its Rage, and suffer'd to go no farther; for here the Plague ceased.

In this manner this Altar might have been a Sign to all that should be born thereafter, that they might know the Judgements of God, stand in awe, and *sin not* in like manner: might learn at the same time the abundant Mercy of God, and behold, admire, adore, and praise his Goodness.

Serm. III. Thus have I offer'd some Reasons for building this Altar, and for erecting it in this Place; and every Reason in each respect may afford us a Subject of Meditation applicable to our selves, of use in our own Conduct.

*First*, When we are sensible of Divine Wrath, we may hence learn, how we may turn it away, and reconcile our selves to the offended Majesty of Heaven.

*Secondly*, When Mercy follows Judgement in what manner we may shew a truly religious Gratitude.

*Thirdly*, How we may perpetuate the Memory of great Blessings.

*Fourthly*, That our Thanksgivings of Praise ought to be celebrated in the Holy Places.

*Fifthly*, That Public Worship in Cases of REAL Necessity may be suspended for a while without offence to true Religion.

*Sixtly*, That we ought in the best manner we are able to fix in our Memorys the Mercys of God.

*First*, These Remarks or Inferences arise from Analogy, and depend on a Parity of Reason. As first, *David* was sensible of his Guilt ; he and the People felt the weight of Divine Judgement, and apply'd themselves to the Throne of Grace for Mercy and Pardon. They humbled themselves, and made their Offering of Atonement. In like manner all true Worshippers of God, when they are conscious of having offended the Almighty, and of having provoked his wrath, and are now suffering for their Crimes, ought to endeavor in the best manner they are able to reconcile themselves to the Deity, to turn away his fierce Anger, and to recover his Favor and Protection.

The King of *Israel* according to the Method prescrib'd by God himself, and then in use thro-out most Parts of the World first humbles himself, and then offers his Sacrifice of Atonement.

But we have **NO ALTAR** ; all kinds of Sacrifices are now abolished amongst us. Our great High-Priest, to whom alone of all his Tribe the Title or Office of Priesthood was ever given, has put an end for ever to this Sort of Devotion. For by his *ONE Oblation of himself ONCE offered* he hath made a full, perfect, and sufficient Sacrifice, *Oblation, and Satisfaction for the Sins of the whole World*. His Blood once

*Own.*

once shed, that precious Blood of a Value infinitely beyond all the Blood of Beasts let out in Sacrifice since the Foundation of the World, hath abolished all Sacrifices of Blood from that Time to the utmost Duration of the World.

How fond soever therefore great Part, by far the greater Part of the Christian Ministry, are of the Title of Priests, what pains soever they take to Justify their ALTARS of their own erecting, there is no Foundation for either in Scripture: The Gospel knows neither of them in the true, strict, literal, genuine Sense of those words.

For the Apostle says even of our great High-Priest himself; *If he were on Earth he should not be a Priest; but he hath obtain'd a more excellent Ministry.* And had the ancient Fathers in their Reply to the Heathen, who objected to them the Irregularity of their Priesthood for want of Sacrifices and Altars, insisted on this their more excellent Ministry also, they had not given Rise and Occasion to those infinite Absurditys contained in the Doctrine of Transubstantiation. There had then been no need to maintain the Validity of their Priesthood, and the Sanctity of their Altars on the Sacrifice of the Body and Blood of Christ; a Sacrifice, when once made, never to be repeated.

It would have been much more to their purpose to have argued with the Apostle: *He hath made us MINISTERS of the new Testament, not of the Letter, but of the Spirit. If the Ministration of Death was glorious, how shall not the Ministration of the Spirit be rather glorious?* The Foundation of their Altars had been better lain, and their Institution much more rational and pious, had they likewise argued with the same Apostle; *We have an Altar, and a High-Priest; by him therefore let us offer the Sacrifice of PRAISE to God continually, that is the fruit of our LIPS giving thanks to his name.*

In this high, exalted spiritual Sense, the Title of Priests and the Name of Altar might have been received, used, and maintain'd without offense. They might have taken example by St. Paul in another place, and have urged; *All things are of God, who hath reconciled us to him by Jesus Christ, and hath given to us the MINISTRY of RECONCILIATION.* Pray! what was the Design now either of Priest

or Altar, but to be of use in reconciling a sinful People to an offended **GOD**?

And how this Reconciliation should be made in Cases of like nature with that before us, our Heavenly Father himself hath taught us by his Prophet *Joel*. *Therefore also now* Chap. 2. *saith the LORD, Turn ye even to me with all your heart, and with fasting, and with weeping, and with mourning; and rent your hearts, and not your garments, and turn unto the Lord your God: for he is gracious and mercyfull. Blow the Trumpet in Sion, sanctify a fast, call a solemn Assembly: gather the People, sanctify the Congregation, assemble the Elders. Let the PRIESTS the MINISTERS of the LORD weeep between the Porch and the Altar, and say, Spare thy people, O LORD! Then will the LORD be jealous for his land, and pity his people.*

This is a Pattern for Public Humiliation worthy to be observed in all Ages and Nations of the World; it is a rational Service suited to the Nature of the Eternal Spirit of Truth, and Wisdom, Purity, and Goodness: There's nothing wanting of true devout Solemnity; and such spiritual Sacrifices as these, thus religiously perform'd are more well-pleasing to **GOD**, than all whole Burnt-offerings of Attainment.

*Secondly: As David, when he found his Sacrifice to have been accepted, and the LORD to be entreated for the Land, offer'd Peace-offerings of Thanksgivings; so, when Mercy follows Judgement let us consider how we may shew a truly religious Gratitude.*

Heaven wants our Thanks no more, than our Offerings. The Happiness of Man is consulted while the Glory of God is propos'd; even the Chastisements of our Father are design'd for our welfare, to open our Eys, that we may see our Folly and our Danger together, how close the one professes on the other. Judgements are directed to make us wiser and better; if they prove our Correction, they shall not be our Punishment. When a sincere Disposition of returning from our Errors is manifested by our Conduct, Mercy immediately displays its Glory; and that **GOD**, with whom is no variableness or shadow of change, is said in Scripture stile

*to repent him of the Evil* inflicted already, and threaten'd farther. Thus the Parent, whose Wisdom and Affection are a mutual Check upon each other, rejoices to see the returning Prodigal, and even weeps to remember the Severity, that he had been forc'd to use to reduce him to his right Senses: He forgets his Anger, and his Love exceeds his Wrath. But then it is expected, that the future Behavior be suitable to his Confessions, Acknowledgements and Promises, that his external Actions declare the internal Gratitude of his Heart: And this, we may fear, has been a continual Defect in all Public, National Thanksgivings.

Whole Rivers of Blood have run about the Altars in former Times: Large Heaps of Incense have darken'd the Sun with Clouds of Perfume; and the Acclamations of the People have rent the Sky with their joyfull Resoundings of Thanks and Praise. Thus in modern Times, and in Christian Countrys with what solemn Pomp, and majestic Procession have Prince and People in holy Congregation assembled themselves in the House of God? With what outward Devotion of Prayers and Thanksgivings have they approach'd the Throne of Grace? With what Harmony of Voices, and well-tuned Instruments have they sung the *Te Deum Laudamus*? With what Strains of pious Eloquence hath the Orator endeavor'd to excite lively Sentiments of Divine Mercy in the Souls of the Audience, and to fix in their Memory an everlasting Sense of **G o d's Goodness**? When yet Luxury, Riot, Excess, and Tumults have finished the Devotion of the Day; and they have immediately relapsed into those very Crimes, which had brought down those Judgements for the Removal of which they had been so lately returning their Thanks to Heaven.

Thus the *Israelites* were continually revolting, and were as constantly chastized; they repented, and were forgiven; they returned their Thanks, and they rebelled again. Their whole History is little more, than a various Series of alternate Judgement and Mercy, Rebellion and Repentance: and it seem'd allmost a Strife between God and Man, whether human Ingratitude or divine Mercy should prevail: till at last they were entirely abandon'd by the **L O R D**, given up to their own Inventions; brought to an utter Ruin, and have ceas'd to be a People.

In all Public National, Thanksgivings therefore it ought to be a very serious Enquiry, what were the Crimes, that had provoked God's Wrath, what might have occasioned those Judgements, for the Removal of which we offer up our Thanks and Praise. Equally serious ought we to be in forsaking those Crimes, and practising their opposite Virtues. Else all our Devotion is no better than a solemn Mockery of Heaven, and an horrible Defyance of Divine Justice, an Abuse of Mercy, and a Provocation of severer Judgements.

Without descending into Particulars therefore, let our Thanksgiving be National, or Personal, Public, or Private, true, genuine, unfeigned Piety must shew the sincere Gratitude of our Hearts : The Mercys of God must not only move our Affections just for the present moment, but have a lasting Influence on our Lives. Such a Resolution, and such a Practise will bring down daily Blessings, will keep back divine Judgements, will prevent Dangers, and make Praises the chief as well, as the most delightfull Part of our Devotion. The religious will ever rejoice ; *it becometh the just to be thankfull.* Praises from the good Man's Lips go up to Heaven with a sweeter Savor than the richest Perfumes from the Altars of old.

*Thirdly* As true Devotion ought not to be the Work of a single Day, nor should the Mercys of God be forgot as soon as the Sacrifice is ended ; and therefore this Altar was left standing as a lasting Monument of Judgement and Mercy, so there may be Means of perpetuating the Memory of great Blessings, and it is meet and right so to do.

Public Buildings may still be erected to remain as durable Memorials of Royal Magnificence, and Piety together. Stately Piles may be raised as conspicuous Signals of a National Gratitude, or as Tokens of a great Community's rejoicing. Thus did our Ancestors in our Native City, the Birth-place of most of us here present, when they saw their City to have raised its glorious Head out of its Ruins after that dreadfull Conflagration, cause that lovely Column, that Masterpiece of Modern Architecture to be built, to shew to Posterity for many Ages, when and where that ruinous

Waste began, in whose Reign its ancient Glory was recovered, its Beauty restored, in such a manner, that they who had seen it before the Flames, could not but behold it as Gold coming out of the Refiners Furnace: and therefore with Gratitude should that Monument be raised as an Argument to many future Ages both of Judgement and Mercy. Curious Coins may still be stampt when great Events have happen'd. Solemn Anniversaries of public Rejoicing may be appointed by Authority, whereby Year after Year a Nation in general, or Societys in particular may celebrate the Memory of Divine Goodnes.

Thus did the Wisdom of the Ancients deliver down their own Glory to late Posterity in Trophys, Triumphal Arches, Holy Temples, and eternal Medals, those great Lights of History and Chronology. But these are of too public a nature to be insisted on in this place.

The truly pious, devout, and gratefull will never want Invention to perpetuate the Memory of particular Deliverances. The *Tabulæ Votivæ* hung up in Temples, when freed from Folly, Superstition, and all Suspicion of Idolatry is a Custom that deserves no Blame: Rather may it be esteemed an Encouragement to an ingenuous glorious *Art*, and a public Declaration to the present and future Generation of devout Gratitude.

Single Persons, and Private Familys may have their Annual, Festival Thanksgivings for particular Mercys and Deliverances, and these, while celebrated with a prudent, sober Joy, may keep alive a Holy, Religious Senfe of Providence.

*Fourthly, As David* was directed by a Prophet from **God** to erect an Altar in that particular Place for Sacrifices of Attонement and Thanksgiving, so by Parity of Reason we may argue, that Holy Places are the most proper for the Public Thanksgivings of a People. This hath ever been a Custom among all Civilized Nations, and continues so to this very Day in every Part of the World, that calls on the Name of God, how different soever be their Manner of worshipping that **God**.

The Christian it is true is not bound up to the strict Observance of some Particulars in the Case before us. Amongst the *Jews*, as has been remarkt several Times already, wherever the Ark of the Covenant, and the Altar of the Tabernacle were settled, thither were the Tribes obliged to go and Worship. But now according to our Savior's Prediction, *The Hour is come, when we are neither to Worship the Father John 4. in any of the Mountains of Samaria, nor yet at Jerusalem. 21.* This Yoke is taken off: Every Christian Country now hath Multitude of Places all equally Holy unto the Lord. For the Author of our Salvation hath declared, *Where Two or Matt. 18. Three are gathered together in his Name, there is he in the 19, 20. midst of them, and while they are agreed on Earth, as touching any Thing that they shall ask, it shall be done for them of his Father which is in Heaven.*

Therefore, tho' *David* might not erect an Altar for Sacrifice distinct from the appointed Place without an immediate Commission from Heaven, this affects not us: Because every Thing strictly belonging to the established Worship, was revealed by **God**, and settled by an unalterable Covenant, the Violation of which was constantly punished from above: And the breaking of this Law in the end proved the entire Ruin of that People, till at last they are become the Hissing, Reproach, and Scorn of the whole World.

But should any argue hence, therefore Royal and Civil Authority extends not to Religious Affairs, they would only shew their want of Judgement, or of Sincerity. For, tho', it's true, in Points of **Doctrine**, and even in **Ceremonies** of Worship absolutely appointed and plainly declared by **God** himself, human Power may not interpose, yet in Cases of external Government, the Civil Power among the *Jews* themselves exercised its Authority. This King himself <sup>2 Sam. 4.</sup> pitched a Tabernacle for the Ark in his own City, and by his Appointment were offered **Burnt-offerings** and **Peace-offerings** before the Lord. He settled the Order and Courses of the Priests to serve at the Altar, in their Turns. His Son, that wisest of Men, **THRUXTOUT Abiathar** from being **HIGH PRIEST** unto the **Lord** for practising against the State, and endeavouring to prevent the Succession: And yet so far was he from being blamed, **that** in an **Heavenly Vision**

Vision he received the highest Approbation of his Wisdom, such an Approbation, as never was before, and never has been since given to mortal Man. He removed the Ark of the Covenant of the Lord out of the City of *David*, which is in *Zion*, and placed it in *Jerusalem*. He built the Temple and appointed its Dedication, and made many Laws and Ordinances relating to the Administration of Divine Service.

Whoever then would plead for the Independence of the Church on the State, must seek other Arguments, than what may be found in the Old Testament. And that one Declaration of our Saviour, **M Y K I N G D O M I S N O T O F T H I S W O R L D**, is a foreclosure of all future Pretensions to such an Exemption from the Authority of the Civil Powers, and Magistrates, which still retain that Prerogative, which we see to have been allways given to all Godly Princes in Holy Scripture by **G O D** himself.

Article  
XXXVII.  
Canon II.

The Example then of *David*'s not being able to erect an Altar of Sacrifice by his own Authority, was peculiar to the *Jewish* Oeconomy under the immediate Direction of Heaven, and extends not to Christian Princes and People, who have always a Power to appoint Holy Places to be set apart, Dedicated, or Consecrated to Divine Service, such as may be most for the Glory of God, and for the Convenience of his Worshippers: And these Places doubtless ought to be regarded at all Times, especially on Occasion of Publick Thanksgivings.

**Psal. 122.** With the Psalmist we should say, *I was glad when they said unto me, Let us go into the House of the Lord, our Feet shall stand within thy Gates O Jerusalem, whither the Tribes go up the Tribes of the Lord unto the Testimony of Israel, to give Thanks unto the Name of the Lord.*

But *Fifthly*, Notwithstanding the Decency, the Reasonableness, and Duty of Assembling together in the Holy Places both to deprecate Divine Judgements, and commemo-  
rate Divine Mercys, yet publick Worship may be suspended in Cases of real Necessity, fairly to be gathered from the Appoint-

Appointment of God himself, to have an Altar built on the threshing Floor of *Araunah*, because *David* could not go to the Tabernacle of *Moses*, and the Altar of the Burnt-offering in *Gibeon*, for he was afraid because of the Sword of the Angel of the Lord.

During the Visitation it is more than Probable, that the Royal Penitent, with the Elders, Priests, and People that accompanied him had not attended on the daily Sacrifices, and the Danger of such Assemblys justified the Omission: A Practise worthy of the serious Consideration of all Sorts of People in this Place. For the spreading of the Infection in all Probability is owing to no one single Cause more than to this.

The Avarice, Craft, and Hypocrisy of many Ecclesiastics amongst the Christians here tempt them to blind the People with false Notions of Devotion, to teach them, that the Public Worships, Confessions, and Penance, must be kept up at the Hazard of their Lives, that nothing can justify their Absence from the Holy Places: Till at last these Teachers in Care of their own Safety change their Note, and by the Example of their own Flight or Retirement allow the People also to provide for themselves.

In the mean while the Fire spreads insensibly among them, daily consumes them, and sweeps away Hundreds before they will be convinced of their Folly and Danger: But what can be expected from those Guides, who suffer, teach, yea! encourage the People to trust in Saints and Angels, who ascribe the ceasing of the Plague to the Intercession of St. *John*, rather than to the Mercy of the Father, or the Mediation of his Son: One might almost think that this severe Judgement is suffer'd to make such Havock, such frequent Wast amongst them, purely to convince them of their Rashness, to punish their Impiety, and correct their Folly.

The *Sottish* Bigotry of the *Arabian* Impostor's Followers has the same, or a worse Tendency. Thousands, and Ten Thousands, yea! I may safely say as many Millions have fallen a Sacrifice to that fatal Article of Predestination: An Article inculcated with great Industry, and yet never, I dare say, believed in its full Extent by any one Man in the World.

World. To shut up their *Mosques* in the very Heat of the Plague, they teach, would be Impiety towards God, and to refuse their Shoulders in carrying out the Dead a breach of Humanity. To use any Precautions whereby to prevent this sad Calamity, they pronounce a Distrust in Providence. The Public Government must make no Provision to keep this fatal Distemper at a Distance from their Country, nor may private Persons withdraw themselves from the impending Danger. With a kind of pious Gravity, or shall I not rather call it an Enthusiastic Stupidity? They will ask, Can you flee from **G o d**? Or hide your selves from his Omnipresence? Will he not find you out in your closest Retirement? And can he not reach you at the greatest Distance? If your Time be come, if the determined Period of your Lives be at Hand, it is in vain to seek Security. Fate is unalterable, and its Stroke inevitable. Allow only the Principle, and the Conclusions are indisputable.

But how inconsistent they, and some other Enthusiasts so fond of this deadly **Doctrine**, are themselves in acting upon this Principle is visible enough in their **Conduct** in other **Passages** of their Lives. Will not the most obstinate Believer of them all endeavour to escape from his **House** falling over his Head? Will he not hasten from the **Flames**, that attack his **Dwelling**? Does he not go down armed into the **Battel** in the best Manner he is able? Does he not oppose, or try to turn aside the **Sword** pointed against his **Breast**? On sudden **Inundations**, that stop his **Passage** in a Journey does he not wait till the **Torrent** abates? In **Sickness** does he not call for the **Physician**, and require **Medicines**? In a **Gangreen** does he not submitt to all the **painfull Operations** necessary for a **Cure**? But allow this one Principle, and all his **Care** and **Caution** is needless, not to say ridiculous. For then neither **Ruines**, nor **Flames**, nor **Sword**, nor any **Hostile Weapon**, nor **Floods**, nor **Diseases**, nor **Wounds** can hasten his **End**. He has nothing to fear but the **Decrees** of **Fate**, and these are **irresistible**. When yet his **Management** in every one of these **Particulars**, and many more, most evidently demonstrates that he believes not sincerely this **desperate Doctrine**: That he allows Room for **human Prudence** without **distrusting** in **Divine Providence**.

And

And why a sober Caution in so dangerous a Case should be discouraged can never be accounted for, except we impute it to the Iniquity of a Government, vile in it self, but by far more vile in its Administration: Except we should say, the Rulers, Scribes, and Lawyers, those prevaricating Interpreters of the Law love to have it so, thereout sucking no small Advantage, the Death of their People being much more profitable to the Governors, than their Lives: Except we should also say; that **G o d** gives up a cruel, treacherous, beastly People to a judicial Infatuation, that they who have laid waste such lovely **Countrys**, ruined those glorious **Citys** all thro-out the *East*, profaned so many Sacred **Houses** of **G o d** should by a blind insensibility be suffered to believe a **Doctrin**e that must spread Ruine, Destruction and Desolation all around, where-ever it is entertain'd so far, as to influence Men's Practise suitably to the Principle.

Let no Man deceive you then my Brethren! with that specious **Doctrin**e of an entire Resignation to Divine Providence exclusive of all human Prudence. Ye may fairly argue from the Example of Holy *David*, that there is allowed Room to take care of your Safety without a distrust in Providence being laid to your Charge, that public Worship it self may be suspended, without the Imputation of Impiety or Profaness: And should any one expose or lose his Life, in an obstinate Maintenance of the opposite Opinion, it may well be askt, who hath required this at your Hands?

In like **Cases** then neither fear, nor be ashamed to provide for your Safety in the best Manner, you are able, only let your **Care** be sober, steddy, regular, rational and manly without those uneasy Hurrys, Terrors, Frights, and Amazement, that confound and distract the Judgement, and often thrust Men into those very **Dangers**, which they too industriously study to avoid. Remember also at the same Time in all such Tryals not to depend too far on your own Prudence, so far, as to shew a distrust in Providence: Lest this shou'd tempt the Almighty to give a sad Proof of the Folly of Man's Wisdom. And when at last you may reasonably conclude that your **Feet** are set in a safe Place,

and the Danger is removed far from you, then in pious Gratitude, and humble Acknowledgments allways say, not unto us, not unto our selves, O L O R D ! but unto thy great Mercys do we ascribe our Health and Deliverance.

Therefore in the *Sixth* and last Place let us in such a Manner, as we shall be able, fix in our Memorys the late Mercys of our gracious G O D . We can't indeed with the King of *Israel* build an Altar in any particular Place; the Plague in his Days was stopt in a miraculous Manner, and in a Manner not to be apprehended by us was he given to know the exact Bounds of Time and Place beyond which it was appointed to rage no farther.

But so it has not been with us. As a Conflagration is often small and slow in the Beginning, the Wind gives it Force, it encreases as it rolls along, the greater Opposition it meets, so much the more it rageth: In the midst of its Fury it blazes terrible to the Beholder at a Distance, and none dare approach it; for it consumes where it reacheth, till by Degrees it sinks, decays, and faints for want of combustible Materials; it lys smothering for a while in the glowing Embers, which fanned by the Wind, give now and then a Flash, till the very Ashes lose their Heat.

Thus we can't say precisely where and when the late Calamity began, no more can we exactly determine the Place, or Day of its utmost Extent. Slowly it crept along, till it came near our Dwellings, it loudly pronounced our Danger before the Expiration of the quadragesimal Fast: We celebrated the Paschal Feast, and then justly afraid because of the Sword of the Angel of the L O R D we forbore our Holy Assemblies, and each Family provided for its Safety according to their Direction: And hardly had some of us retired at a Distance, and others shut themselves up in a close Confinement at Home, but that the Fire of the L O R D shewed it self in a dreadfull Devastation, by the Feast of *Pentecost* or thereabouts, the Dead being carried out by Hundreds in a Day. Thus it continued to spread it's mortal Infection till the Days of Wheat Harvest, when in an amazing Manner a sudden Check, tho' not an entire stop was put to this contagious Evil: And at last about the Time of

the first ripe Grapes, as if its wasting Fury was then quite spent, we may say, this utter Destruction came to its End: It being now computed that for Thirty Days and upwards this kind of Death hath lost its Sting, it's Venome is exhausted, and the Mercy of the L O R D hath prevailed over his Judgment.

In this Manner at least, by way of Chronicle, we may fix in our Memory a grateful Sense of our late Deliverance, remember the Time of our Danger, and record the Days of our Safety. We are indeed but an Handfull of Men, les than a Tenth of *Abraham's* single Family in the Land of Canaan, we are Strangers in a Land that is not our own, placed in the midst of an unbelieveing Nation sworn Enemies to the Faith of Christ. Any Public Monument then we cannot erect: Instead of a material Altar therefore raised of Earth, or unhewn Stone let us to the last Period of our Lives retain in our Hearts the loving Mercys of our God, let us praise him with our Lips, and glorify him and his Son in the Wisdome, Virtue, Integrity and Piety of our Lives.

To put an end now to this long, if not tedious Discourse. As some amongst you, if not the greater Part, may live to see other Visitations of the like Nature, it must become you to live in a constant, serious Regard of these terrible Judgements; with an humble awfull Reverence to be continually looking up to Heaven, to imitate the faithfull Servant recommended in the Parable by our Saviour, who by his watchful Diligence suffers not his Master's coming ever so sudden or unexpected to overtake him in a Surprize. Like the honest, valiant Centinel, be ever on the Guard in your appointed Posts: Let your Affairs relating either to this World, or to the next, be ever in such a Posture, that the Hour may not come upon you unawares.

Piety towards God, Justice to Man, a prudent Concern for your own Reputation, Interest, and Safety, all conspire to convince you of this great Duty. Thus prepared ye may on the shortest Warning without any Dishonor to your selves, without any Damage to others flee from the Sword of the Angel of the Lord, hide your selves for a while from Danger, till the Almighty shall turn from his fierce Anger. Yea! should the Necesity of your Affairs in performing the

Dutys of your Calling oblige you to approach near, or to venture even into the midst of the Flames, thus provided, thus armed ye may with a steddyness of Courage face the greatest Dangers. For while ye are about your great Master's Busines, as ye allways are, while honestly and prudently employ'd in your several Callings, ye may in holy Faith, and Trust, and Assurance say allways, the Will of the L O R D be done: We are ready to obey thy Commands fully perswaded of thy Protection in the worst of Dangers, or of thy glorious Rewards in a better State promised to Fidelity.

This Conduct may lessen the Terrors of Divine Judgement, is the only Preparation to meet them with a firmnes of Soul. This is the truest Testimony of a pious Gratitude for Mercys received, and the surest Earnest of more and greater yet to come. It will be your Safety, Prosperity, and Glory in this World, and your eternal Happyness in the next.





# APPENDIX,

## N°. I.

Page 9.



Because some might think the Number of 1,300,000 Men fit for War to be incredible, it may not be improper to suggest in what Manner the Calculate may be made up so, as not to appear extravagant beyond Belief. Suppose then thro-out a Nation including Persons of all Ages, and each Sex one in Ten may be a **M A N** between Sixteen and Sixty Years of Age, an Age generally allowed fit for War: This Supposition I conceive may be supported by a Survey fairly taken in most Parts of the World: In a single Parish containing 500 Souls, I make no Doubt, amongst them will be found Fifty at least able to bear Arms, between the Age of Sixteen and Sixty: On this Supposition then of One in Ten fit for War; the People of *Israel* and *Judah* will amount to Thirteen Millions of Souls: A great Number, I own, but not incredible, when we consider the peculiar Promises of God to make them a most numerous People, like the Stars in Heaven for Multitude, or like the Sand of the Sea Shore not to be counted: If we take Notice also of the Fruitfullnes of the Land continually described under the Character of the good Land, and the Number of a People will ever bear some Proportion to the Fruitfullness of the Land wherein they dwell,

if

if there be Room allowed, much more, Encouragement given for Industry. We may add to this, that some Countries to this very Day in all likelihood are peopled in full Proportion to the great Number supposed in this Calculate. The Province of *Holland* I question not might upon Examination be a full Proof of the Truth of this Observation. It may be remarkt besides, that Marriage was esteemed so indispensible a Duty amongst them, that it was reckoned no small Crime not to give their young Women in Marriage, or for the young Men to refuse, or delay entring into that State. And to dy Childeſ is threatned by God as a Curse, and was lookt on by themselves as a Judgement, so that every Thing contributed to make that People as numerous in the Reign of *David* as might possibly be imagined.

The *Chronicles* indeed make the Men of War still more by no les than 270,000, which by the Compute above will add two Millions, seven hundred thousand, in all 15,700,000. The Learned *Lightfoot* attempts to reconcile the Difference between the two Accounts on a probable Argument; as also the Difference in the Purchase-Money for the Oxen, Threshing-floor and Instruments, one being only 50 Shekels of Silver, and the other 600 Shekels of Gold. See Vol. I. p. 68.

## N<sup>o</sup>. II.

*Page 10.* The same Author reckons the Crime and Sin of Numbering the People to have consisted in a covetous oppressive Design to lay a Tax on the whole Nation, to make them pay according to their Heads. But why might not the Offense be rather imputed to some degree of Distrust in those frequent Promises of God to make that People like the Stars or the Sea-sand innumerable. God says they shall be without Number, but Man reply's I will number them, cost it what it will.

## N<sup>o</sup>. III.

*Page 11.* That the Reader mayn't be too much surprized at the Number of those who dyed of the Plague, that he may

may not have the least Temptation to suspect the Credibility of the Account, what we have seen our selves may be Argument sufficient. Suppose the whole *Jewish* Nation according to the Computation in the *Chronicles* to be 15,700,000, the Dead of the Plague 70,000 and the Proportion stands thus. 7. to 1570. Suppose the Inhabitants of *Smyrna* and of eight or ten neighboring Villages within ten Miles distance to be 120,000, the highest Allowance with any Probability of Truth, and that for several Weeks together within that Compafs there died 600 in three Days space and the Proportion will stand 6. to 1200. whereby the proportional Number of the Dead for many Days together will exceede that of *Israel* and *Judah*.

In the Village whither I was retired with the Consul and his Family the Proportion was prodigiously greater. For as we were credibly informed there dyed sometimes 18 or 20 in three Days space, and the Number of Souls at most were supposed 400. Say 20 to 400 is 2 to 40. Whereas in the Case of *Israel* and *Judah* it comes short of 2 to 400: above ten times more in proportion amongst our selves than amongst the *Jews*. The same Proportion did not hold all along, but the Havock was very great above 80 dying out of the 400. And in another neighboring Village we were told there were not left alive enough to bury the dead. So that Strangers to this sad Calamity ought not to be startled at the prodigious Number of 70,000 that dyed in three Days space thro-out the Land from *Dan* even to *Beersheba*.

## N<sup>o</sup>. IV.

*Page 13.* One wholy unacquainted with the Customs of the *East* might be at a loss to conceive how the Threshing-Instruments and the Instruments of the Oxen might be Wood sufficient for a Burnt-offering; but this Difficulty is over when it's known, that the Threshing-Instrument is made of strong Plank about two Inches thick, two Feet broad, and between five and six long, bending up a little at that End which is fasten'd to the Traces, but lying quite flat in the other part, its Bottom is stuck full of sharp

Flints,

Flints, this they draw over the Corn in a continued Circle round the Mow till they have brought the whole Heap down on a level, the Man that drives the Oxen standing on this board all the while to make it press with the greater Force. By this Instrument the Straw is broken all to pieces, and the Grain in good measure beaten out of the Ear, which they afterwards tread out more thorowly with the same Oxen going round and round continually: all the while strictly observing the *Mosaic* Law, neither muzzling the Oxen while at work, nor afterwards hindring them from eating what they can. The Corn is clean'd from the Chaff by being toss'd forward and backward in the Wind. For their Threshing-floors are nothing more than some Corner of a Field, or a Piece of common Ground, kept smooth, trodden down, and hard in the dryest Spot they can find conveniently. So that their Harvest and Threshing follow one another immediately, and the Corn is all trod out and clean'd before it is carried into the Granary.

Besides these Threshing-boards there is a great heavy Yoke to each Pair of Oxen, which with the Boards and some small Tools besides may well be allowed to be above a Hundred weight. Suppose then *Araunah* to be treading out his Corn in several Heaps with ten or twelve Yoke of Oxen, and it is full as likely, as that *Elisha* should be found ploughing with as many at a time, and here's Wood enough for a large Burnt-offering.

## V.

*Page 14.* The Highth of the Harvest of the Wheat-harvest especially may be esteemed in these Parts the whole Month of *June*, what is cut down before or after bearing a very small Proportion to the whole. About the End of this Month they begin to tread out their Corn, and have generally done by the End of *July*. And this in this Country is so remarkably the Period of the Plague, that by enquiring of the oldest Men living in the Place it has been constantly reckon'd to be at an end by the 1st of *August*: few if any being attackt after that Day, and very few of those failing to recover.

VI. The

## VI.

*Ibid.* Tho' I pretend not to give an Account of this Distemper as a Naturalist, yet to impart some Observations may not be unacceptable to those, who are so happy as to know nothing of this Calamity but by Reading or Conversation. That it is rather a Contagion than Infection is generally believed: And it is probable from constant Experience, that they who shut themselves up close with a regular Guard on the whole Family, have very seldom, if ever, been known to have had any Accident befall them; even tho' the Plague has surrounded them on every side. I have not only known Instances of this my self, but, with Gratitude to Heaven be it spoken, have in great measure been an Argument and Proof of it my self. There having dyed ten or twelve just under the Walls of our Court-yard, and yet out of nineteen in our Family not one, the Lord be praised, was lost or toucht. Whereas had there been a real Infection of the Air, it would be hard, rather impossible, to account for the Difference of the Air in a few Yards space. There was not a single House that was near us but what lost one or more of its Inhabitants. Many of those Houses were within 40 Yards of ours, some much nearer; four Houses only in the whole Village were free from the Distemper. And the Reason was plain, they would take no care to avoid mixing with the Sick and the Dead.

And yet we may believe there is a certain Disposition in the Air both to receive, and nourish, and propagate the Distemper. For they who have been long practised, and carefull in their Observations can prognosticate with good Certainty in what degrees of Severity the Visitation will be at its first Appearance. The Winter in 1723-4 was remarkably open, and warm: instead of great hasty Showers and Storms of Wind, small drizzling Rains, and sultry Heats, and tedious Calms. Little Snow, and less Frost. There were given out many suspicous Rumors in the Months of *October* and *November*, of malignant Fevers, and of two or three dying in a Family, but almost every one seem'd willing to be-

lieve and hope the best, that the Rumors were false, the Suspicions groundless, and our Fears extravagant: But, I well remember, even then the more Experienced said, such Hopes were without Foundation, that we might assure our selves it would prove a severe Visitation at the last; and thus it crept along by fits and starts: sometimes concealing it self for ten or twenty Days together, and then discovering it self in such Tokens, as hardly admitted of doubt amongst the understanding and the sincere Part of the Inhabitants. Thus we past in this uncertain State for good Part of the Winter without any Interruption to Busyness. Till in *January* a *French* Merchant lost a Groom, who died in a manner suspicious enough: tho' the Family were so fully perswaded of the contrary, that in a few Days after they paid and received Visits thro-out the Neigborhood. But they were soon convinced of their Mistake by losing another Servant in the same Manner. On this they fled from the infected House and in a Day or Two more lost a Third Person in their Family: Our self-flattery was now at at End, and we could find no Pretensions to deny any longer that the Plague was begun amongst us: In so much that several of our Houses were shut up close on *February 18th*. But then finding no new Accident near us, little or no Talk of the Illness in other Parts of the Town for ten Days together most of us open'd again, especially Busyness in some measure requiring it, and return'd to our former manner of Conversation; From *March 1st* to *April 5th* being *Easter-day* our Public Divine Service was attended on as usual. But towards the End of that Week our Family retir'd into a Village about eight Miles from the City: where we were no sooner arrived but that every Day brought us fresh News of the Plague's encreasing continually, till about the Middle of *May* it was said to be exceeding hot, and to rage more violently than had been known in the Memory of most Men living.

During this Time the *South Wind* reign'd much more than usual: The refreshing Wind, called *Embatt*, as blowing from the Sea upon the City, greatly failing of its ordinary Course. The Weather was Sultry, little Wind stirring, and what there was gave more Pain than Pleasure. In *June* the Wind set in for *North*, but was small, and exceeding hot, seldom strong,

strong, and so continued with very little Alteration till July 6th, which proved the hottest Day in the whole Summer, as I judged not only by my Feeling, but by my Thermometer, of which I kept a constant Journal all that Seafon, and on that Day the Spirits were mounted within Two Degrees of entring into the Globe at Top: The utmost Point of extreme Hot. From that Day, and forwards, we had daily Advices from the Town of the Sickness abating: In our own Village it was in a Manner at an End. Whereas there had dyed Two Hundred and upwards in a Day, there now died but 40 or 50, and so went on declining, till before the Expiration of that Month it was said to be entirely ceas'd, no new ones attackt, a few, if any, dying, that had been siezed.

For Three several Visitations in 1719, 1722, and this 1724, I have obserued that the Wind has set in to the *North* about the middle of *June*, and so continued the remainder of that, and all the next Month. This Wind is generally exceeding dry, so dry as to bake a piece of Bread expos'd to the open Air, but out of the Sun, as hard as a Crust in half an Hours Time, it was remarkably dry this Year as I had Opportunity of trying by an exact Hygroscope, dryer at that Time than it had been any Time in that Year before. It may be obserued too that the *Jews* Quarter, which lyes on a sharp Ascent on the *Southward* Part of the City, comparatively speaking was free from the Distemper, till the Wind came about to the *North*, and then it began to be warm amongst them, that Wind blowing directly upon them over the *Turkish* Part of the Town: So that we may suspect, that it carryed the Contagion along with it. But it got among them too late to be so fatal to that People, as it used to be in former Times. It is supposed, that that Nation consists of about 10000 Souls: They own themselves near 1500 to have been attackt, but obstinately maintain that the Number of the Dead was less than 400.

It is generally reported, and allowed without Contradiction, that never were known so many to have been siez'd and so many to have recovered: I have heard it affirmed that of 25000 among the *Turks*, that were Sick, there perished not above Twelve to Fifteen Thousand. But after all I must own

own the Number of Sick or Dead to be very uncertain and various, and no Account by the best enquiry I could make is entirely satisfactory to me. But the nearest Conjecture I can make, with all reasonable Allowances, is, that there dyed at least of all Nations in *Smyrna* and the neighbouring Villages from Sixteen to Twenty Thousand.

## VII.

Page 16. Mr. Peter Jackson Second Son of Sir Philipp Jackson, who dyed of a Feaver on *August 2d*, in the 22d Year of his Age, at the Village, whither he was retired during the Time of the Pestilence in the City.

F I N I S.



